

## Techniques for Teaching Listening

### 1. Fully Exploiting a Listening Text

To fully exploit a listening text you use the text for both content and language.

### 2. The Hourglass Technique

#### A. Demonstration Lesson

Objective: SWBAT listen to and produce descriptions of habits, using the present simple with adverbs of frequency

| Time   | Procedure  |
|--------|--|
| 2 min  | <b>Warm-Up:</b> Quickly quiz the class about topics they might talk about with their friends when they are making small talk. Accept all answers. Indicate that one of the topics is also things we like to do on a regular basis.   |
| 2 min  | <b>Receptive—General Situation:</b> Tell students they will listen to a conversation between two friends. Set the task: "Are the friends talking about last weekend, next weekend, or every weekend? Play tape until "and meet my friends." Check in pairs.                      |
| 2 min  | <b>Receptive—Detail:</b> Have students listen again for which activities Bob does. Confirm in pairs and then as a class. List the activities on right hand side of the board.  |
| 5 min  | <b>Receptive—Language:</b> Have students listen again for the adverbs of frequency that go with each activity. Confirm in pairs and then as a class. Write the adverbs of frequency on the board next to the correct activity.   |
| 5 min  | <b>Productive—Language:</b> Ask students to create full sentences from the prompts on the whiteboard. Write down the answers the students provide. Underline the verbs and circle the adverbs. Note the use of the present simple when talking about habits and note the syntax. |
| 5 min  | <b>Productive—Controlled Practice:</b> Have students write 4-5 sentences about themselves following same pattern.  |
| 10 min | <b>Productive—Free Practice:</b> Put students in pairs. Designate one person in the pair as a particular celebrity and the other as a TV interviewer. Have them role play an interview to find out what the celebrity's habits are on weekends.                                  |

## B. Purpose of Each Stage

| Time | Purpose of Each Stage  |
|------|--|
|      | <b>Warm-Up:</b> The purpose of this stage is to introduce the topic, set the scene, engage students, and motivate them.  |
|      | <b>Receptive—General Situation:</b> The purpose of this stage is to have students listen to extract the main idea from the listening text. At this stage they may establish the situation, the characters, the relationship among the characters, the emotional tone or the main argument. |
|      | <b>Receptive—Detail:</b> The purpose of this stage is to have students listen to extract specific content details from the listening text to deepen their understanding of the topic or situation.   |
|      | <b>Receptive—Language:</b> The purpose of this stage is to have students listen for specific language. This can be pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar or discourse structure.  |
|      | <b>Productive—Language:</b> The purpose of this stage is to analyze the language to pull out rules, patterns, format or word meaning.  |
|      | <b>Productive—Controlled Practice:</b> The purpose of this stage is to give students the opportunity to use the language in a controlled manner. You want students to achieve accurate use of the language at this stage.  |
|      | <b>Productive—Free Practice:</b> The purpose of this stage is to give students the opportunity to use the language freely in a real situation. You want students to achieve fluent use of the language at this stage.  |

## C. Ordering a Listening Sequence<sup>1</sup>

Put the following activities in order to make an hourglass lesson pattern.

**Productive—Free Practice:** a) Students role play several scenarios at the airport: cancelled flight, lost luggage, etc.

**Receptive – General:** b) Listening task: Where is the conversation happening?

**Productive – Controlled Practice:** c) Students write down other sentences about the listening scenario using the verb tense studied.

**Receptive – Language:** d) Listening task: What verb tense is used to announce the departure gates?

**Warm-up:** e) Show picture of an airport: elicit where, and what typically happens there? Ask who has taken an international flight?

**Productive – Language:** f) Elicit sentences about the departure gates from the students. Write them on the board. Underline the verb tenses. Ask Students why this tense was used.

**Receptive – Detail:** g) Listening task: Give Students a flight number. What is your gate of departure?

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Learning Teaching, Scrivener, pg. 151.

### 3. Planning an Hourglass Lesson

Using the transcript you have been given, work in pairs or in a small group to plan an hourglass lesson that fully exploits the listening text.

Objectives: SWBAT \_\_\_\_\_

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| Time   | Procedure                                |
|--------|--|
| 2 min  | <b>Warm-Up:</b>                          |
| 2 min  | <b>Receptive—General Situation:</b>      |
| 2 min  | <b>Receptive—Detail:</b>                 |
| 5 min  | <b>Receptive---Language:</b>             |
| 5 min  | <b>Productive---Language:</b>            |
| 5 min  | <b>Productive---Controlled Practice:</b> |
| 10 min | <b>Productive—Free Practice:</b>         |

## 4. Variations on an Hourglass Lesson <sup>2</sup>

### A. Exploiting the Content

Objective: SWBAT talk about different cultural practices

| Time   | Procedure   |
|--------|---|
| 5 min  | <b>Warm-up:</b> Ask students in which country the following practices are common: bowing when meeting (Japan); men holding hands (Arabia, India); using only the right hand to eat (India) etc. Ask students if they have experienced any of these. Ask them which would be the most difficult to get used to.  |
| 10 min | <b>Receptive—General Situation:</b> Indicate that students are going to hear a monologue about someone's trip to the Sudan. Ask them to speculate on what cultural practices they're going to hear about. Have participants listen to the monologue to confirm their predictions about cultural practices. Confirm the answers as a class.  |
| 10 min | <b>Receptive—Specific Detail:</b> Have students listen again for the details on the different cultural practices introduced in the text. List the practices out as a class.   |
| 20 min | <b>Productive—Free Practice:</b> Ask student for times when they have made a mistake with a cultural practice. Ask students to prepare some advice for visitors to their country with regards to cultural practices. What things should visitors be careful not to do? Once students have prepared some ideas, put them in groups of mixed cultures, and have them share their ideas. |

### B. Exploiting the Language

Objective: SWBAT listen for and use past forms in a context of cultural practices

| Time   | Procedure  |
|--------|--|
| 5 min  | <b>Warm-up:</b> Ask students in which country the following practices are common: bowing when meeting (Japan); men holding hands (Arabia, India); using only the right hand to eat (India) etc. Ask students if they have experienced any of these. Ask them which would be the most difficult to get used to.   |
| 10 min | <b>Receptive—Language:</b> Indicate that students are going to listen to a story about someone who went to the Sudan and experienced cultural challenges. Ask students what verb forms they would expect in such a text (past forms). Create a table on the board, with the following headings: Past Simple, Past Continuous, Other past forms. Have students listen to the text to take notes on the verb tenses to complete the table. Confirm as a class. Have them look at the tape script to check. |
| 20 min | <b>Productive—Language:</b> Look at each of the verb tenses in turn. Confirm both the form (how it is made) and use (when it is used) of each tense.   |
| 10 min | <b>Productive—Controlled Practice:</b> Have participants write ten sentences about cultural practice mistakes they have made.  |
| 20 min | <b>Productive—Free Practice:</b> Ask student for times when they have made a cultural mistake. Have participants tell their partner a story (or stories) about their experiences.  |

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Harmer, J. (1998). How to Teach English. Longman.